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Big Coverup In Burglary, Chavez Says

By Rick Carroll

Cesar Chavez and his top lawyer in the United Farm Workers charged yesterday there was a massive political coverup of the 1967 burglary of the union's headquarters in Delano.

"I think the Reagan Administration was up to its neck in a coverup," Chavez told newsmen in La Paz, the union's headquarters east Bakersfield.

"The whole thing is a little Watergate. Law enforcement officials knew about this but did nothing."

He and UFW general counsel Jerry Cohen were referring to admissions Tuesday by Jerome Ducote that at least two major grape growers conspiratorially backed his his burglary in Delano.

Cohen charged that "the FBI, the CIA and the Delano police of course have known about the burglaries for a long time — the Delano police since the night they occurred and the FBI since February of 1974 when they shadowed a meeting I had with Ducote in a coffee shop of the Ramada Inn in Bakersfield where he tried to sell me back the stolen documents for $25,000."

Cohen said the CIA learned about the burglaries when Ducote, according to Ducote's own admission, met with a CIA liaison agent in Washington in 1967 following a meeting with then-Congressman Charles S. Gubser (Rep-Gilroy), who has since retired.

"So," said Cohen, "a central question is, 'why did it take so long? Why does this all surface now after the three-year statute of limitations has run out, and the trails to evidence grown stale?"

Cohen said there ought to be a high-level investigation of law enforcement inactivity in the case, "but I don't know whom to call upon. You don't send in Typhoid Mary to fight an epidemic of typhoid."

Meanwhile, Ducote has told state investigators that while he wasn't stealing documents in the late 1960s he was criss-cressing the country raising money from

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ıig businessmen "for our operaion."

Checks raised in this way, he said in a statement on file in San Jose Municipal Court, were forwarded to a post office box in Willow Glen, Santa Clara county.

Kenneth Wilhelm, then secretary of the Santa Clara county Farm Bureau, had the key to the post office box, Ducote said.

Ducote, a former Santa Clara county sheriff's deputy and former president of that county's Young Republican Club, is being held in lieu of $100,000 bail on 21 counts of concealing stolen documents and grand theft.

His lengthy statement given to state agent Walter Kubas details how he burglarized the headquarters of the United Farm Workers in Delano, the San Jose Peace center, the Oakland Peace Center and Ramparts Magazine, to name a few.

He performed these political chores, he said, with the backing of various farmers opposed to the UFW or with the backing of certain businessmen.

On one occasion in 1967, Ducote said, the late William Penn Patrick paid him $2000 for a copy of the San Jose Peace Center's mailing list.

Patrick, head of the multimillion dollar cosmetics pyramid known as Holiday Magic, also offered him $1400 for a mailing list of the Oakland Peace Center.

Ducote said in his statement that a few days later he and Henry Scherling and Andy Gulermovich entered the Oakland Peace Center and stole the mailing list. But they never got paid, Ducote said.

Scherling and Gulermovich were mentioned by Ducote as being involved in other political burglaries with him. They could not be reached for comment on the Oakland Peace Center job.

Ducote told agent Kubas that he raised $40,000 from California farmers to fight UFW leader Cesar Chavez between 1965 and 1970 and that he raised undisclosed sums from around the country when he was not being a burglar.

In 1968, he said, he went to Philadelphia at the request of Stephen D'Arrigo, a Salinas Valley farmer, and got J. Howard Pugh, chairman of the board of Sun Oil Co, to send a $1000 check to the Willow Glen post office box.

Ducote also said he picked up a $1500 check in Los Angeles from "a Mr. Hearst" at the Los Angeles Herald Examiner in 1968.

The newspaper was then involved in a strike, Ducote said, and he explained (apparently to Hearst) about the efforts being made to combat Chavez.

Ducote said the $1500 check was made out to something called the Fire and Police Protective League but the money "was routed back to our operation."

Ducote said he showed documents stolen from Chavez, social reformer Saul Alinsky and the San Jose Peace Center to Representative Charles Gubser (Rep.-Gilroy) and to various government intelligence agents in Washington.

He also showed some of his stolen political documents, he said, to State Senator Hugh Burns, then head of the State Senate Un-American Activities Committee.

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